

AN INTERPRETER OF ENGLAND

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“BOOKS HAVE BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE Englishman: he has been praised and blamed, flattered and belittled, but never ignored. . . . What common stuff have I found in our people? Fundamentally a stout individualism, yet with the power of co-operation, a broad and tolerant humanity, and humour. Not wit which is of the intellect, but humour which is of the heart. You may pity humanity, you may hate it, but humour is a saving grace: humour can only exist with a love for your kind, and even behind the laughter there are often tears.”

# AN INTERPRETER OF ENGLAND

*The Falconer Lectures  
delivered by*

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL BALDWIN  
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IT was in the early August of 1927 that I last spoke in Toronto, and I began my speech with these words: "I am here merely as an interpreter of England to you." I am here to-day in response to an invitation from your great University to inaugurate a lectureship founded in grateful recollection of the wise and beneficent rule of Sir Robert Falconer.

Few Canadians are more highly respected than Sir Robert. He became President of this University in 1907 and held that office for twenty-five years. He found a University

## AN INTERPRETER OF ENGLAND

disunited and struggling with the problem of absorbing several denominational colleges into the general academic organisation. In 1932 he left a University united and sure of itself, possessing all the great faculties which are an integral part of any first class university, especially a famous Faculty of Medicine (the discovery of insulin being one of its outstanding achievements), a vigorous body of teachers and students (both graduate and undergraduate), Hart House, which is a unique and successful idea and has been widely copied, and—in a word—a University which is admittedly one of the most significant in the English-speaking world. Sir Robert, who is happily still with us, presided over your destinies for twenty-five years and has made a name for himself which will long be

## AN INTERPRETER OF ENGLAND

treasured by men while truth and wisdom are revered.

You have indeed done me a great honour. I am no scholar, nor yet a man of letters, yet it may be that the time is propitious for an expansion of that phrase "an interpreter of England," and in the spirit of an interpreter I will proceed to my task. I would speak to you of my country and what she stands for to-day: of my people and what they brought to this continent, and something of that wider world of which we are a part. And I speak, not as one who has read of these things in books or studied them in manuals, but as one who has tried to play his part in the evolution of British democracy in those searching years which followed the Great War. Such views as I may express are my own, the result of

experience, and probably shared by large numbers of my fellow countrymen.

But no one is committed by them, nor have I the right to speak for any. My only object is to suggest lines of thought which may lead to a better understanding not only between us but between all the English-speaking peoples, and to contribute to world peace rather than to world friction.

Had it been possible I should have desired more time in which to prepare lectures of the quality you have a right to expect. But my desire to visit you at this time was so strong that I resolved to do the best I could in what was a race against time when I had many pre-occupations and my difficulties were increased by the kaleidoscopic changes in the international situation. Some passages lost their



meaning before the ink was dry and had to be re-written even in the last week. But the original intention stands and, if any words that I may speak can make you think for yourselves on these great problems or help you in any way to face them, that will indeed be my ample reward.

To-day I want to speak of those strangely different component parts which made that new nation that became England and to trace the growth of those characteristics which in process of the years made the Englishman: to show how that character produced our democratic system and how upon that character were laid the foundations of the New World. There are important points in which our democracy differs from others and that should be considered before passing

to-morrow to say something of democracies in general, of their strength and of their weaknesses.

And in the present state of world affairs I cannot avoid saying something of Europe and her history in the last twenty years, what we have attempted and where we have failed. I would add only one thing. For fourteen years I preached (and I fear that word is applicable to many of my speeches) up and down Great Britain, attempting to achieve a national unity of spirit and a high conception of what democracy may be, and calling for unselfish service to that ideal. It is impossible to write of these things without repeating oneself: my mind is so soaked in my subject that appeals made at great meetings and lines of thought put to my own people at times run unconsciously from my pen.

Most of my plagiarisms are from myself and I crave your forgiveness in advance.

The British Empire is not the first Empire of which England was a part. For four centuries—as long as a period from the Reformation to the present time—she was an integral part of the great Roman Empire, an integral part of that great European and Mediterranean Imperial Federation. Little wonder that in the long procession of the centuries men have dreamed of another federation of these peoples whose remote ancestors lived under a peace that has never since been accomplished except in these latter years within the British Empire. May our Empire keep the peace within her borders until her example is followed throughout the world.

But the Roman Empire fell and Saxons and Angles, Danes and Scandinavians poured into Britain and the name of England was first heard in the world. Little is known of the history of these invasions, of the ceaseless fighting, of the extent to which the Celtic population was killed or driven into the extremities of the country. Of the invaders themselves we know something, yet only enough to whet our curiosity.

The Saxons were a fierce, self-reliant race, coming from the Frisian coast: but what impulse sent them at that time to cross the sea and seek a new home in a land where that home could only be secured by hard and bitter fighting? We shall never know, but there is a theory that has been held by some historians which has always interested me.

It is that rumour reached the Saxons that Attila and his Huns were pushing north, and the Saxons, who feared little on earth, hated and dreaded the Mongol invasion. Hence they took to their boats *en masse* and made for the nearest island. Now if there be any truth in this, you have as by-products of the Hunnish invasion, the medieval Venetian Republic on the Adriatic and ultimately the British Empire, radiating from the north. I wonder if that is too fascinating a picture to be historically true?

But whatever the urge that drove the Saxons from their home, it was but a tremor on the seismograph which records the eruptions of peoples compared with that which impelled the Scandinavians. These incomparable seamen from Scandinavia and Denmark

pushed off in their long-boats across the Atlantic and to the Black Sea, and the viking appeared in Venice, in Athens and in Constantinople. They fought: they settled: and their sea-sense and love of adventure was their lasting contribution to the character of that strange amalgam that became the English race. You see one of the great flowering times of these characteristics in the Elizabethan age, in the secular wars with France, and in our own time in the Great War.

It was their spirit which enabled our people to settle on the American coast in a climate in which it was said no Englishman could live: it was that spirit which enabled your first settlers to face the grim Canadian winter: from their spirit come the hardy sailors and

fishermen of the Atlantic coast, and maybe the western urge of the pioneer.

But this first Scandinavian invasion was hardly forgotten when the last successful invasion of our island home took place. Coming when it did, it was of supreme importance in our history. That, I need not say, was the Norman invasion.

The wide open mouth of the Seine had proved an irresistible magnet to the Norsemen, whether from the fiords or from the creeks of southern Denmark, and those gallicized Scandinavians during their occupation of Normandy had acquired much from the French and adapted what they had learned with amazing skill to make them one of the most remarkable people in medieval history. Norman arms and Norman prowess were

known, as Macaulay said, "from the Atlantic Ocean to the Dead Sea." They were, it is true, a nation of warriors, but much more.

They were great architects and builders: they had a knowledge of law and of government. In Anselm and Lanfranc they had men of the highest Italian culture: in their Duke they had a King who was a King. And they brought to England a sense of unity and ordered government.

The national boundaries in Europe were fluid, as they had been since the break-up of the Roman Empire. England's boundary was the sea, from henceforward inviolable, and from that day to this we were able as no other country was to become welded into a nation without interference by the foreigner in our own house and to develop our own



characteristics in our own way. For a time it was a toss up whether England became a province of a greater French kingdom or whether she became an independent kingdom of her own. But the sea decided her fate: the island could not become a province of any kingdom however great.

And at this point let us consider for a few minutes what the Englishman became.

The welding of Saxon, Norseman, Norman, and whatever Celtic blood had mixed with that of the conquerors began under the Norman kings, and in process of centuries the Englishman emerged, a type as distinctive and unmistakable as the Frenchman, the Italian or the Spaniard.

Books have been written about him: he has been praised and blamed, flattered and

belittled, but never ignored. I would speak of him to-day as I have known him through a long life, a life which has brought me in intimate contact with all classes, politically with all parties, and in which I have seen our people in war and in civil strife. What common stuff have I found in our people? Fundamentally a stout individualism, yet with the power of co-operation, a broad and tolerant humanity, and humour. Not wit which is of the intellect but humour which is of the heart. You may pity humanity, you may hate it, but humour is a saving grace: humour can only exist with a love for your kind, and even behind the laughter there are often tears.

It is said that we are impervious to ideas, and that problems of the intellect do not

interest us as a people. There is truth in that, but I do not think that we are incapable of understanding.

The question that arises in every Englishman's mind when a proposition in politics or in anything else is put to him is, "Will it work?" and he has an uncanny instinct as to what will and what will not work. This attitude and this instinct preserves him from strange alien forms of political upheaval to which more logical or, if you like, more intellectual races have succumbed.

But you cannot begin to understand the Englishman until you try to realise the impression left on him generation after generation by the English Bible. I am not sure that this is not the cause of the peculiar outlook of our people and the failure of foreign countries to

understand us; perhaps also an explanation of those charges of hypocrisy and perfidy that have so constantly been brought against us.

In the most formative time of our history the greatest translation of the Bible in English appeared. From the literary point of view no greater work was ever produced.

Our own literature is steeped in its language and for generations it was taken to the hearts of our people, and the Hebrew spirit of consciousness of human weakness and dependence on God stamped itself on the English character. This led to that constant questioning of conduct, to an uneasiness as to whether any given choice of ways was right or wrong, that is incomprehensible to men to whom such background did not exist. Even to-day the Englishman is worried as to whether he

is doing right, individually or nationally, and when, as so often happens, he does wrong he is not unnaturally branded as a hypocrite. If it be true that we are drifting from the teaching of our fathers, that reproach may in time be lifted from our shoulders.

In practice the English are a kindly hearted folk. They want to be at peace with the world and they cannot hate for long. Nevertheless, when they have to fight their tenacity is unbreakable. But after a fight they are always ready to make friends.

At home or abroad their sympathy is always with the underdog.

I spoke of his stout individualism. What characters you meet in England. I have heard people speak of Dickens' characters as though they were caricatures! I have met

them myself in all walks of life, in the streets, in country ale-houses, among my friends. And until the day when we have mass production of men as well as of motor cars may that precious individuality continue! The individual, I admit, does grumble, we do grumble, at the weather, at the government, at home and abroad; but that is skin deep. We never worry. Worry works internally and affects the nervous system. In times of crisis the grumbling ceases and the nerves hold.

I have said years ago that we are impervious to criticism, and if that be so you have a fair ground for the charge of arrogance so often laid against us. But that we are arrogant I deny. The fact that we live in an island—and the English Channel in the old

days was a formidable barrier—has undoubtedly kept us apart from that free intercourse with foreign nations which we should have enjoyed had we lived on the Continent. No one could, as it were, peep over our garden wall. I rather think the Englishman admits that the other fellow may be right, but he is so intent on justifying his own conduct to himself and ultimately to his God that he feels the impossibility of any outsider knowing enough of his circumstances and ways of thought to justify his expressing an opinion, or attempting to influence him. His direct responsibility for his conduct is impressed on him if not by his own study and inclination, by his heredity and subconscious belief, and that individual relationship to a higher power is one of the deepest motives

in preserving the individuality of the human soul: and that preservation demands freedom. So I would say that the love of freedom and recognition of the individual human value were two of the outstanding qualities which the Englishman took with him to the New World. Are these qualities which I have attempted to describe recognisable as qualities seen to-day in the descendants of the Englishmen who left their old home for a new, or have they altered in another environment? As I see it, changes must come, and with the years descendants of the common stock may only too readily fasten on the differences and overlook the fundamental likeness. Consider, for instance, from her situation England is a part of Europe: she cannot if she would avoid the consequences of a geographical



fact. But it is more than that: for two thousand years she has with Europe what F. S. Oliver called "an ancient inheritance held in common: the riches of long suffering, of baulked endeavours, of age-old traditions that still move the hearts of men." The responsibility of her position on that continent is and has always been great. The Englishmen who crossed the Atlantic left those responsibilities to be borne by those who stayed at home. Whatever responsibilities might fall on him as an individual in a nation either forming or to be would be different, widely different: and he passed from a small island to the vast areas where the internal problems would be of another nature from those which occupied the old home folk. But I like to think that it was here in Canada

that a testing time came at a time that would have tried the sagacity of an old and experienced state. The new responsibilities falling on the new nation were met by her sons with the help of understanding men from the old land.

The story should never be forgotten and is full of lessons for you, for us and for the world. I have spoken of it before but it can never be repeated too often.

Two short centuries ago, French and English dwelt peacefully together by the waters of that noble river which flows by the old city of Quebec. Then came another of those secular wars between French and English, which spread from Europe into Lower Canada and was closed on this continent by the twin deaths of two great heroes, Wolfe and

Montcalm, to whom you have erected a single monument. And let Canada never forget it was the loyalty of Quebec in the American War of Independence and subsequently that settled the future destiny of Canada and makes her nationhood to-day a reality. But the political difficulties of unity at that time are more clear to us to-day in the light of history than they were to the men who had to solve them. As I have pointed out before, the Loyalists who flocked to Canada knew what constitutional rights were, and the settlers coming over from the Mother Country were of several races and of many religious denominations. Then you had the French with their traditional feudal society, untouched by the great revolution in France, speaking the language of that country which

they had left a century or more before and devoted Catholics with a great tradition behind them in the New World as in the Old. How were Freedom and Unity to be reconciled? The history is known to you, but it seems to me that the ultimate solution came from the loyalty of the common people led by men of goodwill and robust common sense, the leaders a democracy always needs, and never more than to-day. Let us never forget their names. I will choose half a dozen in Canada: La Fontaine and Robert Baldwin, who, I like to think, is very possibly a remote kinsman of my own, George Cartier and Sir John Macdonald, Alexander Galt and George Brown. And on the English side, Lord Durham, Charles Buller and Gibbon Wakefield, Lord Grey, Sir Charles Bagot and Lord Elgin.

## AN INTERPRETER OF ENGLAND

Two languages, two cultures, two great religious branches, united to form Canada, and she found unity and freedom.

The foundations were laid : you know what you have built on them. May your future equal or even surpass your dreams. But I like to feel that some of those English qualities I have tried to describe played their part in this great work, and the reconciliation and union of French and English is an object lesson to Europe at this moment, if she can learn it; an object lesson that a condition of war or the threat of war is not of necessity a law of nature, and that after centuries of strife nations can seek peace and they can find it.

But I had another reason for interpolating this history of a hundred years ago at this point. Not only does it show a tolerance

that we believe was a growing characteristic of our people, but it gives evidence of certain qualities by which alone our Empire can be preserved. The last speech I made as Prime Minister, four days before I left office finally, I had the great honour of addressing representatives of the whole Empire at a Coronation Banquet on Empire Day in London, and they were good enough to listen to me while I made some reflections on the Empire which had occurred to me from my experience of having presided at three Imperial Conferences, particularly at that one of 1926 which settled the principles now enshrined in the Statute of Westminster and enjoyed the co-operation of your present Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, who played a distinguished part in bringing them into being. I said then what

I always realised, that the passing of the Statute of Westminster would call for high qualities of statesmanship in every part of the Empire, at home and overseas.

The one tangible link is the Crown: obvious material links are trade and self-interest. But these material links while they may help are not all. We need something more profound than profit-making. Our real bond is the sharing of common ideals, love of freedom in its highest sense and the pursuit of peace: and let us not hold these ideals for selfish motives only, motives inspired solely by a desire for comfort and self-preservation, but from a deep conviction that these are ideals in which the whole world can share and by the exhibition of which we may inspire others to walk in the path that we have chosen. Those qualities

## AN INTERPRETER OF ENGLAND

which inspired both leaders and people in securing unity and representative government for Canada are what we need to-day and in the years to come: Loyalty, Sympathy and Understanding. Loyalty to each other, Loyalty to the conception of Empire, and I use Empire here rather than Commonwealth of Nations because it includes a great population and vast areas in the Colonies whose progress is so dependent on the sympathy and the understanding of the Commonwealth. Sympathy provides the atmosphere in which understanding is possible. Any ordinarily intelligent man can understand, but it needs wisdom to use understanding. The problems, now and in the future, of each component part of the Empire are different and, if we are to criticise each other, a very real understanding is



necessary. But I sometimes think, inverting what I have just said, that if you can only get a real understanding, you almost invariably have sympathy. At least I know that has been the case with me, over and over again. Then it is a good thing to concentrate on points of agreement: there are generally many more of them than points of difference.

Let us never forget that "the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life." The lasting union is the union of the spirit.

Now I can well imagine, in speaking of other countries being persuaded to tread in our path, I am assuming English complacency and self-righteousness, and that the gist of my remarks may be summed up "We are better than you." Nothing is farther from my thoughts. We are not better than other

people, but there has happened to fall to us an experience which has not fallen to other people. We, in our Empire, after much experiment, have adopted the method of mutual co-operation in attempting the solution of our problems. We have happily been able to show that difficulties can be resolved by discussion where we are certain they could not be by force. We have found that this method of co-operation can be adapted to domestic needs as well as to those of wider imperial import.

There is nothing of complacency or self-righteousness in holding that such methods may be employed in a wider sphere and in failing to see why they should not be employed with success. Every country can make its own peculiar contribution to the progress of

the world, and that progress is retarded if countries with a great traditional culture cease to make their contribution.

What is our contribution? I think we can see that clearly as we proceed to consider democracy in its wider sense. But, before doing so, which is my task to-morrow, it is necessary to have clearly in our minds certain features of our constitution and of our party system which are peculiar to ourselves. No two democracies are alike, either in their form or their spirit, and to understand their differences is the preparation for sympathetic co-operation.

The British Constitution is a monarchy and a democracy. It could never have been created: it is the result of centuries of evolution and native in its growth. It has only once

## AN INTERPRETER OF ENGLAND

seen fratricidal bloodshed and that was three hundred years ago. It has resulted from the work of countless men of all classes and of many creeds, men often far better than ourselves. This tradition is in itself our greatest safeguard, and without it we should be more exposed to certain obvious dangers in not having a written constitution. In that we are singular. The very flexibility makes us cautious and at the same time allows us an adaptability in our evolution which our political sense enables us to utilise to the fullest extent.

Our party system is not one of rival ideologies, nor of imported innovations adapted to a structure unfitted to receive them: the parties themselves have been rather fluid organisations without any logical process,

and they had the faculty of adapting themselves to changing conditions and arose out of the social circumstances of centuries.

The danger to our British constitution will come on the day when our party system is changed to that of a system of rival ideologies, neither of which will suffer the very existence of its opponents. Any attempt to change the basis of our constitution, whether from the left or right, might easily strain it to breaking point. That is why, internally, we can have no dealings with Fascism or Communism. Either would destroy the soul of our people and the form of our constitution. I have no fear myself: you will never get a fascist movement with us until you have a disintegration caused by communism. If such disintegration appeared, the forces of law and order would win: to

what form of government such victory would lead us no man can tell. But it rests with us to see that these things do not happen, and I do not think they will.

You may see instances of the curious reaction of parties in the support once given to Free Trade by the Tories, in the traditionalism displayed by Liberal statesmen, in one effect of the advent of a Labour Party. I am convinced that the daily intercourse of members of the older parties with genuine working-class members in the House of Commons has quickened enormously the understanding of labour problems, an understanding on the human side that no amount of political propaganda could ever have achieved. The House of Commons is a remarkable institution. It is the true home of democracy. It is a body

of some six hundred members, in which a man is judged solely by what he is. Sincerity is the main test, and no one, whatever his views, however unattractive his personality, however feeble his power of speech, will fail to get a hearing if the House is convinced of his sincerity. And there is no shrewder judgment of human personality than the House of Commons, no finer sifting of the essential qualities of the individual.

And as the House is moving into this strange new world, as it debates the problems of to-day and to-morrow, still is it conscious of tradition, still it realises that it is not a creation of to-day or of yesterday, but is carrying on the daily work of centuries, and in its daily life it is carrying on traditions of

courtesy and good manners that have been handed down by word of mouth and by example from generation to generation. And yet it is intensely human: it can lose its temper and be sorry for it afterwards like any child. But a most curious thing is the way in which the corporate honour of the House gradually makes its appeal to every member. I have watched that growing feeling showing itself in men who had entered the House full of suspicion, sometimes almost of contempt, but who have been captured in due course by its great and wide humanity. Belittling an institution such as the House of Commons by speakers or by the Press is rendering the worst possible service to constitutional government. Criticise fairly, as much as you like, but there is nothing so corrosive as constant ridicule



which kills respect. That has always been a danger in a democracy: and never more so than at the present time.

The position of the Crown is perhaps one of the most difficult features of our constitution to appreciate. In the course of time the Crown has been shorn of most of its prerogatives but never, in my opinion, has it stood for more than it does to-day. It is in a far stronger position than it was a hundred years ago, and that is mainly due to the wisdom and the character of the monarchs who have in that time occupied the throne. In our view it is a tremendous thing to have as the head of the State a man who is independent of and is outside politics. His presence as the coping-stone, as it were, of our constitution is in itself a guarantee of the stability of our

democracy. So long as he is there, there can be no Fascist or Communist government.

This is recognised to-day by all parties and it gives his position its strength. But the work of the King to-day calls for great qualities, qualities of character, for it is by character that the present position of the Crown has been built up and is sustained. So you see how great is the demand we make upon our King. He alone has a task which only ends with his last breath: his ministers come and go but his work goes on.

These things are difficult for those brought up under other systems of government to realise, but in my view there was never a time when the Crown meant so much to the people at home or when they more realised the services of the King, and recognised more

fully the essential part he plays in the maintenance of our liberties.

If my memory serves me rightly, somewhere in *Mein Kampf* Hitler says that democracy is the forerunner of Marxism. I judge no other country, but in England the existence of our democracy is the greatest safeguard against it that we could have. Rival ideologies are not an internal danger in Great Britain.



## II

HAVING said something yesterday of the Englishman and his character, I would speak to-day of democracy, its strength and its weakness, its ideals and its pitfalls.

Despised by the totalitarian states, hated alike by Communists, Nazis and Fascists, it was never so necessary for those who believe in it to prove to the world that the best progress is compatible with freedom and that freedom can lead a people farther and better than regimentation. There is one aspect of a great truth conveyed in some wise words of President Wilson, and I will quote them because they go to the root of the matter.

He said: "Democracy is wrongly conceived when treated merely as a body of doctrine or simply a form of government. It is a stage of development. It is built up by slow habit. The English alone have approached popular institutions through habit. All other nations have rushed prematurely into them: through mere impatience with habit, they have adopted democracy instead of cultivating it."

So far from being surprised at the failure of democracy in many countries, I should have been amazed if it had succeeded. If ever there was an indigenous product it was democracy as you and I understand it. Growing through the centuries its roots are in our being: we are so used to its free air that we sometimes notice it no more than the air we breathe, and

it is only when it is threatened that we realise that without it we should perish.

Lip service is paid to it by all; but it needs more than that to preserve it. Few of us perhaps realise how far back our roots go. I have on more than one occasion, speaking at home, reminded my audience of some words used by the late A. L. Smith, the distinguished historian and Master of Balliol: "Nowhere," he said, "was the village community so real and enduring a thing as it was in England for at least twelve centuries of its history. In every parish men met almost daily in humble, but very real, self-government, to be judged by their fellows, or to be fined by them, or punished as bad characters; to settle the ploughing times and harvest times, the fallowing and the grassing rules for the whole village.

To these twelve centuries of discipline we owe the peculiar English capacity for self-government, the enormous English development of the voluntary principle in all manner of institutions: our aptitude for colonisation, our politics, our commercial enterprise, our Colonial Empire, are all due to the spirit of co-operation, the spirit of fair play and give-and-take, the habit of working to a given purpose, which tempered the hard and grim individuality of the national character." That curious combination of individualism and the power of co-operation of which I spoke yesterday.

Such training, such experience, has seldom been absent. Voluntary co-operation is a second nature to us. The rise of the great Co-operative movement, the beginnings and development of the great Friendly Societies,



the whole Trade Union movement, each in their several ways have given our people the very training in affairs and in the dealings of men with one another which enables them to take their place in such a democracy as we have to-day.

But there is another and different development which calls for some examination as it is so intimately connected with the planting of democracy in the New World.

And in examining this question we have a perspective which the actors could not have, and we can see the development that was bound to follow on certain actions when the future road was hidden in the mists, as indeed we have little knowledge whither the road we now travel may lead us. The great event which gave such an impetus to democracy was

the Reformation. I made a few observations yesterday on certain aspects of the English Bible: I once described it as a "high explosive" and it never more justified that description than in the reign of Elizabeth and the first Stuarts. Two levers, as has been pointed out by a continental historian, were used to break the authority of the Pope; free enquiry and the priesthood of all believers, and you can see in a moment how the democratic idea developed from that. The divine right of the Pope had been questioned. How long could the divine right of a King remain? The primitive church had been democratic: it would seem the return to a purer faith to make the community the visible centre of the Church. To throw down was one thing: to build up another, and this is not the occasion

to review the intricate history of succeeding years. But one thing is worthy of particular note. When it became impossible to fit the growing theocracies within the framework of the existing state in England, the more extreme Puritans left their homes before the fall of episcopacy and the monarch to seek across the seas that liberty they could not find at home.

Two things stand out in my mind at this time of our history, if I throw myself back into that age and assume no knowledge of subsequent events. One is the framing of the Agreement on the *Mayflower* which was drawn up on the eve of their landing in the New World. This Agreement, signed by a handful of Puritan refugees, who had no thought but to seek an asylum where they could live

their lives according to their beliefs, free and unmolested, has been rightly regarded as one of the most remarkable documents of modern history. The struggles of these men in New England were long and arduous, but the seed they brought with them from home ripened after much suffering and hard experience into the American constitution as we know it.

The other thing to remember happened in England: the rule of the extreme elements during the Protectorate which led swiftly to the Restoration and all that it involved, which showed even at that time that England did not love dictators. And from that day to this no attempt has been made to rob her people of their freedom nor will any such attempt ever be successful.

I have only touched on this period of our

history but it is one of the most profound interest and deserves the careful study of every would-be politician. There is, however, one scene I would bring before you from those strange times. I make no apology for this passage, though I have used it before. There was a debate held at Putney in 1647 on the principles of democratic government: Cromwell and Ireton were meeting representatives of the army. The case for the army was put by a Colonel Rainboro and in his speech you will find this sentence: "Really I think the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as the richest he."

Those words were spoken nearly three hundred years ago. Could you find better to-day? The present Master of Balliol, in whose *Essentials of Democracy* you will find an

account of the debate, makes some wise remarks on them: "That seems to me the authentic note of democracy. The poorest has his own life to live, not to be managed or drilled or used by other people. His life is his and he has to live it. None can divest him of the responsibility. However men may be in wealth or ability or learning, whether clever or stupid, good or bad, living their life is their concern and their responsibility. That is not a scientific nor a common-sense doctrine. It is a religious and moral principle. It is the translation into non-theological language of the spiritual priesthood of all believers. Men who could say things like that have gone deep into the heart of things." I agree, and of the spirit of our own democracy I shall have more to say, but through

all these strange years, from the Reformation to the Restoration, you find the search for a divine sanction, and the ultimate spiritual aspect of the State and of its government has never wholly disappeared.

But what of democracy in England to-day? There is in my view no more difficult system to maintain and to develop. Endless experiments have been made from the earliest times and the difficulty of preserving it for any length of time, as time is reckoned in history, is very great.

What is government for? To what end ought statesmen to work? These questions were asked by the Greeks who had a way of going to first principles. And their answer was that the citizen of the State might attain to the highest possible degree of virtue and

well-being. That was a good answer and the great experiment was tried in the little Greek city States. Freedom and self-government, social equality and civic patriotism, all these were born, flourished, rotted and died. The glorious days of Athens are summed up admirably by Dr. Glover? "The Athenian Democracy was a government of citizens, met in an assembly, where, without president, ministers, ambassadors, or representatives, they themselves governed. They created a beautiful city and a law-abiding people: they united the Greek world or a large part of it; they defeated the Persian Empire in all its greatness and drove the Persian from the sea. They made an atmosphere where genius could grow and where it flowered and bore the strange fruit that has enriched the world for



ever. 'Whate'er we know of beauty half is hers.' The political temper and the scientific philosophy, sculpture and poetry — Athens gave us them all in that period, a century or so at the longest, while Democracy flourished." A century or so at the longest. Let statesmen study the causes of that tragedy. Aristophanes, who had seen the glories of Athens, put into the mouth of one of his characters these words, which I at any rate recognise as liable to be true in our times, as they were in his. "If two orators proposed one to build ships of war and one to increase official salaries, the salaries man would beat the ships of war man in a canter."

The Athenian democracy whose power was based on the sea perished within a generation of the day on which those words were written.

The rhetorician, the demagogue and the sophist had done their work and Plutarch tells us that the Athenians from being sober, thrifty and self-supporting people, became "lovers of expense, intemperance and licence."

The price of liberty is eternal vigilance, vigilance on the part of the rulers, vigilance on the part of the people. Under a despotic ruler, monarch or dictator, all the people have to do is to obey, and the system may work well so long as the despot is a wise and good ruler. But no succession can be guaranteed and the system cannot last. The forest beech is a magnificent tree but nothing grows beneath its shade.

And the rule of the despot is the last under which men of the quality to govern a civilised people in the twentieth century can be raised.

Democracy has within itself the seed of dissolution as well as that of life and it is to preserve the seed of life that all the energies of democracy must be bent. The supreme task is to combine freedom and discipline, freedom without discipline is licence; discipline without freedom becomes tyranny. And so you must keep your ship of State on an even keel, remembering the perils on either side.

A free people is sufficiently conscious of its rights and has complete freedom in the expression of those rights so that it is necessary to impress on them its duties. Now I said that under a dictator the people merely had to obey: they need not think.

If a democracy is to be healthy and to survive, to bring out what we believe is latent

in our peoples, it must have the service of every man and woman in the body politic. So long as a representative system exists, and it is difficult to see what could take its place with the large populations concerned, the first obvious responsibility resting on the people is their choice of representatives. And this responsibility rests on them in every field of public work, from Parliament to the administration of the great cities, of counties, to the smallest units of local government.

There is no democratic country that has not fallen short in these matters. Yet if you have not clean honest administration, there you have a rotten patch in your body politic, and, as when you have one or two bad apples in a basket, you don't know how far the rot may spread. Democracies cannot afford

rotten spots. Ideas are on the wing to-day. No system is sacrosanct. There are great experiments being made in Europe and none can say how far the ideas behind their achievements may travel. But we may rest assured that those who believe in democracies, who dream of what they yet may become in the elevation of humanity, must work as they have never worked before to keep the ideal before their people and make them realise that their ideals contain the hope of the nations.

Ideas are on the wing to-day. Let me ask you some questions which have been running through my mind, questions to which I have not yet found an answer but of which a solution must be sought. Are we confident that there is no danger at attempts of some form of democratic totalitarianism? Does not

that danger which at first thought seems fantastic seem less fantastic when you recognise the danger of the mass mind, fostered as it is by modern invention and the ingenuity of man? The most potent influences to-day are the radio, the cinema and the Press. The last two broadly speaking are practically uncontrolled and are governed by the box-office, sales and advertisements: none of these things bad in themselves but making little contribution to those qualities essential for a people to survive in such a world as we see around us. And that is why I have always held with conviction that the radio in England should never become a profit-making concern. That is a problem for each country to settle in its own way: I am speaking only of my own country. But there are disquieting elements

of mass opinion, so all pervasive that I know I am not free from them myself nor I expect are you. In those far-off days before acceleration was regarded as a manifestation of civilisation, who could have imagined in his wildest dreams the apathy with which mankind would regard, would take as perfectly natural and inevitable events, the death and mutilation of peaceable human fellow creatures on the roads of the world? Are we more callous than our fathers, or is the daily food of sensation and horror served up to us by the sensational papers numbing our sense of feeling and our capacity for realisation? But it is mass numbing and few escape it. Are we really conscious of the trend of the modern industrial system, with its alternating periods of feverish activity followed by the throwing-

out of armies of workmen into unemployment and despair?

We know that until international trade functions again it is a problem that can only be mitigated and we know that international trade can never be restored as we would see it so long as great nations are wasting their substance on armaments instead of producing goods for use.

But are we alive and eager to tackle this problem and are we sure that, if we do not, the advent of totalitarian democracy may not be nearer than we think? Then lastly consider the attitude towards war. I remember the thrill of horror and rage caused by the first bombings of cities and of civilians in the last war. That is now an accepted fact and we have seen in China and in Spain a foretaste of what war means. It is probable



that our ancestors would have adopted these methods had they known of them, but it should make us wonder whether we, the heirs of civilisation, are advancing quite as fast as we sometimes think we are. Here again, I know that the peoples of every country hate war, dread war, but dumbly accept it, and millions of them are too apathetic to struggle against it. No, the mass mind is a terrible danger, and where it exists, or can be made to exist, the progress towards the extinction of spiritual freedom is rapid and certain, though it is far easier in a State where democracy has never functioned. The energising force came from Russia and there is a great deal in common in the methods employed. The State machine is captured by a political party: every aspect

of life is reorganised; the party is the government and the leader of the party becomes the embodiment of the will of the people. The amount of bloodshed required depends on the character of the opposition encountered and on the temperament and character of the principal organiser of the party. In Russia the dictatorship carried on a form of tyranny to which the Russian people were not unaccustomed, but with many refinements which you might expect from a form of civilisation which had progressed and learned much since the days of Peter the Great. I always doubt if you would have seen the totalitarianism of Italy or Germany had it not been for the Russian revolution and the efforts of the Bolshevik enthusiasts to spread their principles in foreign countries.

The disintegration of authority in Italy and Germany was met by the organisation of parties who succeeded in their object in countries where there was no strong democratic root, and where people were crying out for a lead. And it is the crying out for a lead that must be listened to and answered if it should come in a democracy. But once started on the road that leads to an authoritarian government, the course of events is more or less similar and, whatever benefits are reaped, the end is the same. The living spark of democracy, the freedom of the individual human soul, is stamped out. . So these systems are not for us.

Can the Western democracies co-exist with the totalitarian States? There is no reason why they should not. And if there be danger of war,

that danger will not come from the democracies. If, however, in the war of ideas, our democracies allow their domestic policy to be invaded by and overcome by the ideas of Bolshevism, Nazi-ism or Fascism, if they lose their birthright, then indeed the whole course of Western civilisation will be changed and I for one shall see little hope for mankind. So I often ask myself, is there a survival value in haphazard methods? What should be the motive that should unite the people in a democratic country to make the sacrifices necessary for their own preservation, to have such a faith in the eternal value of what they stand for that they become immune to subversive attempts from left or right and can prove their capacity to defend themselves if need arises by force of arms? It is not enough

to shout for personal freedom, if by personal freedom you mean nothing more than the liberty to do what you like. What is at stake is freedom of the spirit and that has never been won without discipline and sacrifice. I feel strongly that mass organisation is in the air even in democracies; so many currents set that way.

And I feel that is a thing fundamentally antagonistic to the principle of individual liberty and that personal responsibility of which I have already spoken, that personal responsibility still characteristic of the Englishman, and I would fain believe of millions of those on this side of the ocean who came from homes in that little island called Great Britain.

I can, of course, only speak with knowledge of my own country, but there is much in

common in the problems of democratic States. We shall each have to tackle them as they affect us in our own way, though there is a great deal we can learn from each other in our failures no less than in our successes. A democracy, if it is to live, must be founded on character: the character of her own people.

Ennius said: "On character the Roman State is founded," and when that character was lost the Empire fell, and Ammian wrote later that the Roman word was no longer trusted. Let us see that our word never fails. Then a democracy needs patriotism. Patriotism is an emotion, and emotions can raise men to the heights or drag them down into the depths. As with other emotions it can be exploited for mean and ignoble ends. Pure patriotism, as I once pointed out to the Glasgow students

asks nothing and seeks nothing, but gives service because it "can no other" and is a necessary ingredient of that character upon which alone we can build. I always think that Joseph Conrad, a Pole by birth, illuminated the meaning of the word in a pregnant paragraph of which I have myself made use: "Patriotism," he said, "is a somewhat discredited sentiment because the delicacy of our humanitarianism regards it as a relic of barbarism. . . . It requires a certain greatness of soul to interpret patriotism worthily, or else a sincerity of feeling denied to the vulgar refinement of modern thought which cannot understand the august simplicity of a sentiment proceeding from the very nature of things and men."

Can these things be acquired by education?

Character and such patriotism? That is for the consideration of all of us. How far is our education calculated to form character, and how far is it calculated to stuff little pitchers so full that nothing can come out of them? Teaching can do much but example more. I hate quoting myself, but for so many years up and down Great Britain I have been talking on these subjects that I am bound to repeat myself. It must be fourteen years ago that I quoted this observation: "The idea of particular people pursuing learning has been familiar for scores of centuries, but the idea of preparing the minds of whole classes or communities for co-operation and common action by a training in common ideas is a comparatively new one. That is the gigantic task to which we are committed." Co-



operation far wider than class co-operation: co-operation of the whole which is the old idea of the spiritual priesthood of the nation, but comprehensive and inclusive, not narrow and exclusive. There are many who have had out of the pool of life far more than they have ever put into it: what payment can we make but to give ourselves to the utmost of our ability to the service of our fellows? In a democracy our ideal is that every one of its members should feel that he has had a square deal: that the community means that he should have opportunities of education and that he should be housed in decency, and that his life should be tolerable so far as it can be made so. And this, of course, brings us up against the problems of industrial life. The industrial system has never been static, but

since the war it has been moving and changing more quickly than man can adapt himself to the demands of the machine. Speed and monotony are two aspects of the modern workman's life which demand investigation, not only by employers and employed, but by scientific psychologists, for they are consciously or unconsciously at the bottom of much of the unrest we see around us. We know little as yet of the effect of speed on the human brain or nervous system. Physical strain was probably first experienced in the Garden of Eden; it is a simple phenomenon and generally curable. But nervous strain has no such history. I have known it as a proximate cause of serious strikes, both on the part of the men whose daily work is on the most expensive and complicated machine

tools and of those who drive heavy lorries or omnibuses through the crowded areas of our great industrial cities. The medical profession at home are studying this question as are the employers and the Trade Unions and, believe me, the problem is a real one and a vital one for the peace and happiness of industry. I have spoken on this matter to a gathering of leading industrialists in London and I am happy to have the opportunity of saying what I have said before this great University. There can be no influence more potent than yours in the building up of a democracy such as we would see. In the great edifice of education you are the coping-stone. Your influence goes out into all lands and the spirit of your work gives the impelling force to each generation as it leaves your halls.

Would it be an impertinence on the part of a Chancellor of an English and of a Scottish University to say a few words of his conception of the functions of a University in the modern world? Truth and the maintenance of standards: the continuous search for Truth and the expulsion of error: the building up of the trained mind that can detect error however skilfully concealed.

Freedom from bias in teaching: the capacity to recognise first-class work at all times and in all places, and a determination that what is third-class or shoddy shall never be acknowledged as first-class or as the real thing. The lowering of standards is an ever-present danger in democracy and a University must be adamant in maintaining them.

These are some of the things for which a

University stands. For the students, they have the opportunity of acquiring intellectually according to their need and their capacity. But, and not less important, each man should learn to find himself. This is always difficult to the young man, that adjustment to the grown-up life through which we older men have passed, some with more ease than others, but few without much heart-searching. And how good for us was the social intercourse, the clash of personalities, the friction which rubbed off our odd corners!

If a man leaves the University able to stand on his own feet, he has learned a great lesson. If he can, during these short years, see his job in life and fit himself for it, then indeed he is fortunate.

The University is an epitome of true

democracy. Merit alone is the hall-mark and freedom—ordered freedom—its birthright. Never must that freedom be bartered away. Universities need money; much of modern scientific research and teaching works through expensive tools; money has come to them generously from wealthy men or from the State. But let us never forget that the wealthy men and the State are honoured by being allowed to take part in the sacred work of education and, while their contributions are received with sincere gratitude, nothing gives a right either to the wealthy man or the State to interfere in any way with the freedom of the University itself. It must always be its own master, responsible to its conscience and sound tradition for what it teaches and how it teaches.

And so may the sons of our universities go forth into the world inspired with that great freedom that gives that spirit and that discipline of mind and body which gives responsibility, and they will be true life-givers to others. We cannot all gain the prizes of this world, but we can each one play our part in raising rather than depressing the soul of the country from which we spring. The testimony of the University in face of the world was described in striking words by Principal Story of Glasgow: "The testimony the University has borne to the Empire of Idea—to the spiritual as nobler than the material; to the meanness of mammon worship and the real excellence of the life of patient study, of earnest thought, of unselfish endeavour, or loyalty to truth." Life-givers to others, I

said a few minutes ago. To whom? Of you students some will give your lives to study and research, and by you will be carried on the great tradition of the University. The learned professions will claim many; the Law and Medicine and the Churches, great and fruitful careers. Some will be schoolmasters, but the greatest number, I imagine, are destined for some kind of commercial career. It is natural in these days that that should be so. In that field the demand for brains is universal and the rewards of success are great. But there is a field, inexhaustible, that calls for the best men we have to give, the field of public service, what F. S. Oliver, in one of his delightful volumes on the age of Walpole, called the Endless Adventure, the Endless Adventure of governing men. There is a



life of ceaseless endeavour, of many disappointments and frustrations, of scanty legitimate pecuniary reward, but of enthralling interest and where your influence may be of incalculable value. The problems that lie ahead of all our democracies need a fine quality in the brains that will try to solve them. They need men of fine character, sympathy and understanding to deal with the human side of them. I said something many years ago in Canada on this subject, and I should rejoice to think that among those who are listening to me to-day there may be some chosen spirits who will dedicate their lives to the service of the people, on whom, in years to come, long after my voice is silent, may rest the burden of Canada's greatness.

### III

IN my first lecture I dealt with the English character, in the second with English democracy. To-day I want to examine the ways in which that character and that political system, or rather spirit, have reacted to events at home and abroad since the war; how we have attempted to work out our salvation.

Our problems are simplified by our size but complicated by our situation. It is difficult for us at home to grasp the immensity of Canada. Lady Tweedsmuir has helped us by telling us that if we could turn this Dominion over, using the Maritime Provinces as a hinge, Canada would stretch across the

intervening Atlantic and cover the British Isles, France, Germany and a part of Russia. The whole of Europe has been described as merely a rather small promontory upon the vast and mysterious continent of Asia. You could easily submerge Great Britain in your five Great Lakes. We are a very small country—everything is under our hand. Then we are, thanks to our being a small island and to a long history, a homogeneous people with long traditions, traditions that are felt by all. And our peculiar humour is such that we can transmute our losses into gains. England, it has been said, is the only country in which the one historical date everybody knows is that of a great national defeat. The dates of the Armada and of Waterloo are far less familiar to our people than 1066. Another

fact to be borne in mind is that having regard to our area and our population we are the most industrialised nation in the world. The next fact is this: this little island, out of whose loins has come a great Empire, is planted close alongside a continent containing a score of rival political entities, whose history has been one of almost ceaseless conflict. For example, of the three hundred years from 1618 to 1918, roughly one hundred and twenty-five have seen Germany (including Austria), or parts of Germany, involved in warfare. The States of Europe are the residual deposits of war; their frontiers were congealed in blood on a hundred battlefields. They have never known tranquillity for long, and beyond the noble qualities of courage and endurance that war evokes there survive the ugly and brutal features of

our primitive nature—mendacity, greed, cruelty. All this was true before the World War and it is true of those who survived that Great Divide.

It is not easy more than twenty years after the event to recapture the atmosphere of those first years following the peace. Perhaps I may be allowed to quote some words of my own written near the time:

“The new world had come and no one knew it. Once more history was being written in letters of fire and blood, faster and more terrible than ever before, men climbed to the doors of heaven and sank to the gates of hell. And after four years there was peace and we hardly recognised it. The new world had come and many did not know

it. Much we did know. We knew that the cold courage and tenacity of our race had stood the test: we knew that a million of our best men were dead or disabled: we knew that the civilisation of Western Europe, built up through endless years, had been saved as by a miracle for we had seen it sliding down into the abyss. We saw the boundaries of Europe once more fluid: politically the work of generations compressed into a lustrum and whole peoples with responsibilities thrust upon them for which their previous experience had but little prepared them. And over all, exhaustion and desire. Desire for what, no man could tell. Yet this was to be expected. . . . It was but slowly and bitterly that men learned that the sins of the world must be

paid for and that after four years of slaughter and destruction many times four years would be needed to repair even part of what had been lost. The new world is here and what is our part in it?"

Periods of demobilisation after war are always difficult, and the years from 1918 were no exception. The crowns of three great empires—the Austrian, the Russian and the German—had fallen. Over many parts of a chaotic Europe revolutionary winds were blowing: it was evident that in political status vast masses of the people of Europe had advanced during those four years further than they might have in a generation, and the question was whether their status had progressed beyond their education or their power

to utilise it fruitfully. In England we for the first time adopted universal suffrage, enfranchising also a large number of women, for whom a full franchise followed a few years later. In England also, largely owing to an active propaganda, there had been in the years immediately preceding the war a growing feeling of class consciousness, and there was now a certain amount of inflammable material at hand. Voices were heard towards the end of the war: "Let us bring this war to an end and get on with the only war that really matters." The Russian Revolution was hailed as the dawn of a millennium for mankind by many, and by others regarded with horror. We were then, more than at any time in my recollection, a divided nation. Powerful and widespread economic evils were also at work



revealing themselves in mounting figures of unemployment. The country was unhappy: there was a bitter feeling running through the workshops, north and south, east and west: we were antagonistic and not co-operative. Industrial difficulties were made more difficult by the introduction of politics into the struggle. The sudden relaxation of the bow, the release from the intense and increasing strain of the four years of war had a curious effect on the minds of the people, and the study of the immediate post-war psychology will be an interesting task for the historian.

The storm broke in the General Strike of 1926. The struggle had to come and the Government had to accept the challenge. I said soon afterwards, speaking in the country: "Our people are not going to throw over

Parliament to set up divine right either of the capitalist or of the trade unionist and we are not going to bow down to the dictatorship of either." The chief result to my mind which emerged from this unhappy year was that industrial adjustments were less and less regarded in terms of war and more and more in terms of human co-operation. In recent years there has been a great improvement in methods of consultation and violent nationwide collisions have been avoided. Simultaneously there has been a great advance in the provision of social services. The health and well-being of millions of working folk are safeguarded by a manifold system of Insurance, Pensions, Unemployment Benefits and Allowances, Holidays with Pay, Education, Housing and Slum Clearance, Hospitals, Clinics and

other agencies for maternity and child welfare. Some idea of the scope of these services may be got when I say that their cost in fifty years has risen from fifty millions to over five hundred million pounds per annum, although in that period the population has increased by only one-half.

To draw the appropriate lessons from the history of the years which separate us from the end of the war is not easy. Heroism in war is much more abundant than wisdom in peace. There are some things which the plain man can see to-day which were hidden from statesmen only a few years ago. This was even more true in the foreign field than in that of home affairs.

The Covenant of the League of Nations came into force with the Versailles Treaty, of which it formed a part, in January, 1920. It

has taken Mr. Lloyd George fifteen hundred pages to tell the truth about the Peace Treaties, so it is useless my attempting to do so in fifteen sentences. I had some part in the events which followed, but it is in no spirit of self-vindication that I shall comment on them to-day. There are some statesmen who have never made a mistake: I am not one of them, but I leave a final judgment to those who shall come after us. None of us is free from blame.

Whatever the faults of European statesmanship I am bound to agree with Mr. Lloyd George in regarding the rejection by the United States Congress of the Versailles Treaty and the Covenant and the physical collapse of President Wilson as a major disaster. It removed from the arena the most powerful, disinterested and impartial signatory. Fifty

per cent of the power and influence of the League vanished when America retired.

But that is only half the truth. The Treaty may have contained all that is claimed for it. It vindicated international right, rectified frontiers, liberated oppressed nations, broke up huge armaments, established a Society of Nations, placed the German Colonies under mandate, humanized conditions of labour, and provided for the revision of its own enactments in the light of experience. But to sign the Treaty was one thing, to enforce it in an atmosphere of mingled victory and defeat was another. No one was prepared to think of Europe as a whole. Neither the war nor the Treaties extirpated the local hatreds and jealousies of south-eastern Europe and the Near East, and the despotisms of generations

were not finally cleared off the map; they were soon to return more terrible and more cruel than ever. Reparations may have vindicated public right but their extraction did not make for international brotherhood. They ruined Germany and dislocated the economic structure of the rest of Europe. America and Britain, with excellent intentions, poured millions of dollars and pounds into Germany only to force a hot-house expansion of industry; then followed the catastrophic slump in world trade from 1929 to 1933, when thirty million workers were unemployed. It was out of that morass of misery, sown with dragons' teeth, that Hitler arose, and, in place of the Russian Bolshevism, which Foch feared would sweep over Germany at the close of the war, we now see enthroned Nazi-ism, which is a greater

## AN INTERPRETER OF ENGLAND

menace to justice and liberty because it is backed by the power of a nation whose supreme genius lies in organisation and which for centuries has been taught to regard the career of arms as the most glorious.

When on the motion of President Wilson in 1919 the Peace Conference adopted the Covenant of the League, the hopes of all good men were high. Over forty nations bound themselves to bring in the reign of law into their mutual relations in place of the reign of war. Machinery for consultation and discussion was set up in Geneva and equipped with permanent headquarters and an international secretariat. Thither went the statesmen of Europe to Assembly and Council and Committee. The radios of the world listened in. Real and important successes were achieved.

## AN INTERPRETER OF ENGLAND

Some armed conflicts were stopped without resort to armed coercion. Measures of relief to countries in financial straits and to refugees were organised and human welfare in various ways actively promoted. Many items would go down on the credit side were we drawing up a detailed balance sheet. But were every item entered in the profit and loss account should we not to-day have to confess that the chief lesson taught by the history of the League up to date is either that it set too high a standard for the abilities of statesmen and the morality of mankind, or that given the conditions of the problem, its solution by sovereign States, each one unwilling to part voluntarily with a shred of its sovereignty, is almost impossible by the method of peaceful change? Some critics have gone even further and argued that this post-war



chapter of history "would have been in no essential different if the League had never existed . . . It was a superfluity, a functionless fifth wheel on the chariot of history that spun ineffective in the air. When it tried to originate or to control, in all major matters it failed." I am not quoting one of my old die-hard supporters, but one of the ablest of our Labour critics, Mr. Brailsford.

The theory of the Covenant was admirable and the machinery of the secretariat was efficient. Notwithstanding all our disillusionment I am glad this great and novel experiment was tried, and I am not dismayed by this first failure. I have often said that democracy is the most difficult form of government. To bring fifty nations (as they became), big, medium and little, from east and west, north and south,

democrat, Fascist, and Communist, into one assembly and expect world peace to issue therefrom was pitching expectation too high and should moderate our disappointment. Men do not change their minds with their latitude and longitude. The statesmen who arrived at Geneva did not leave Paris and Prague, Berlin and Budapest and London behind them. They brought them along in their dispatch-cases. Something was gained by personal contact and discussion. But the experiment proved that justice is not the first fruit yielded by the tree of knowledge but the last. If you advance too fast for the conscience of mankind, or the nations which compose it, you have to retrace your steps and pick up something you forgot by the way or left behind at home. The human natures of

national States are no better than the human natures of their citizens. They are neither logical nor consistent, they are rarely magnanimous and they can be cruel. None is completely rational. I am, of course, speaking only of Europe. There has never been in England a logical government. All those I have ever had to do with at home have been shot through and through with inconsistency and compromise. I regard that as not altogether a defect in the present state of development of other people's governments.

That, in effect, was the trouble with the Covenant or with the dominant members who moulded the policy of the League. They were logical. They sought to apply the letter of the Versailles Treaty. They sought to clothe its clauses with a fictitious permanence and "a

show of moral sanctity," which was alien to the nature of political things, to the potential might of Germany, for example. England and France, the two initiating Powers at Geneva, were never really at one in this policy, and I have often wondered if we were wise in withdrawing our guarantee to France when the United States withdrew hers. Neither the policy of conciliation, for which in the main we stood, nor the policy of coercion, for which in the main France stood, was thoroughly tried out. We ought, as Mr. Lloyd George truly says, to have applied the revisionary powers of the Treaty with far greater vigour. We did scale down reparations and shouldered more and more of the financial burden. We went to dangerous lengths in unilateral disarmament. We tried hard to believe that

given fair treatment Germany would respond and would observe the rules of good neighbourhood. The result, however, was an Anglo-French policy which neither crushed Germany nor placated her. It may be that France's diagnosis of the German character may prove to be the true one under the leadership of Hitler, truer than in the days of his predecessors. Good and evil dwell within one nation as within one heart, and sometimes one and sometimes the other is in the ascendant.

The theory of the Covenant has proved too exacting and exalted for European practice, but unless mankind is forever to be subject to the law of the jungle, we shall have to come back to the Covenant, or something like it, again and again. As one writer has said: "The only alternative to war, which is force directed

dictatorially by nation against nation, is law, or force canalised by reason, force sustaining an accepted code of international conduct, and levying penalties on the transgressor, whoever he may be."

But the League attempted too much and too soon. We shall have to advance by stages. The coercive clauses of the Covenant which postulated collective action by every member proved unreliable—how unreliable the future will disclose—and would in fact have thrown a disproportionate burden on Great Britain, with or without the aid of the Dominions. The British Empire is represented on every continent. It has its own vast responsibilities, but it can no longer be "the champion of international justice in general." That role was plausible in the 19th century when our navy

swept the Seven Seas and afforded to this American continent the indirect protection under which its amazing expansion took place. To-day it is not possible.

For those of us who believe in the infinite value of the Christian civilisation, what makes the situation grave to-day is the coalition of paganism and machinery. It is true, as Mr. Middleton Murry has reminded us, that the machine is the product not of the Indian or of the Chinese, but of the Christian civilisation. The world is full of paradoxes and that is one. To-day the products of the energy let loose by the Reformation and the Renaissance are at the command of men who in their propaganda deliberately foster hatred, conceal the truth, denounce peace and glorify war. I know it is said that we have no quarrel with

## AN INTERPRETER OF ENGLAND

either Italy or Germany because their political systems differ from our own. In the interests of peace and of trade, in the interests of the Germans themselves, it is argued, we must carry toleration and forbearance and neighbourliness to extreme limits. No one will question that England has carried this policy of appeasement to great lengths in the hope that a *modus vivendi* can be found. The fact that there are limits remains, though no one can indicate them very clearly in advance. Political insanity knows no bounds. "When the house falls, the good are buried with it and their goodness with them." That is a fate we are determined to avoid, not only from the primitive motive of self-preservation, but also because we prize our heritage above that which is opposed to us. There is there-





fore proceeding in England to-day a material rearmament and a spiritual rearmament. We are looking to the defences of body and soul. The multiplication of ships and guns and planes you can tabulate; what cannot be scheduled is the searching of heart which is going on amongst our people. Once more they are "going over the fundamentals" of their faith and asking questions which go to the root of the matter. To begin to ask questions is to begin to answer them.

Can democracies resist tyranny successfully without becoming themselves enslaved? They can only do so if the spiritual effort they put forth is greater than and in control of their material effort. They can only do so if means do not become ends, if force remains the servant and not the master of truth. "As

far as one can tell," writes Mr. Middleton Murry in the book from which I have already quoted, "the end of Christian civilisation is imminent, unless it is averted by a tremendous effort of the imagination; it will destroy itself, more swiftly, more completely and more cruelly than any civilisation has ever been destroyed before." And he goes on to urge that "the main hope of saving Christian civilisation from total disaster is the rebuilding of the universal Christian Church—the re-erection of an acknowledged spiritual authority."

The dictators start with solid advantages. They can by modern mass methods impose beliefs and demand obedience to a creed which rouses the baser nature of man. If you begin early enough, it is easier to train a race of

robots than a race of freemen. To act is easier than to reflect. The one may mean blind obedience, the other open-eyed responsibility. The one means the doping of massed ignorance, and a servile Press, the other compulsion to think, to form judgments, to take decisions and to welcome truth from the four quarters of the compass. It is the contrast between the slave mind and the free: I would almost say between slavery and civilisation, but with this further difference from the slavery of the ancient world, that one modern robot can throw a bomb or start a machine which may deal out as much death and destruction as a whole regiment. The totalitarian ideal is the mechanical solidarity of the herd under the leadership of a dictator, omnipotent and infallible. The democratic

ideal is the moralised solidarity of the group under the leadership of the citizen who is deemed wisest and best and who can be dismissed.

The advantages of democracy lie not primarily in the realm of organisation but in the very nature of freedom, that same freedom which has made available for the dictator the instruments with which he would destroy their creator. De Tocqueville said: "There is nothing so fertile in marvels as the art of being free." The free man can win, if not in the short, then in the long run. But warfare in the air, as I have said many times, has revolutionised the problem. There would be no long run for those who are unprepared.

The nature of the issue between might and right has not changed; it is the conditions of

the struggle which have changed. The ancient and mighty troublers of the earth "swam to sovereign rule through seas of blood"; to-day no blood need flow. New social techniques are available for directing mass behaviour in obedience to one man's will; new economic techniques for the industrial regimentation of the workers; new financial techniques for the ruthless taxation of rich and poor and for the plunder of aliens and the enemy within the gate. Plans can be prepared in secret and applied overnight for the enslavement of a whole nation and for the swift incarceration of its leaders by the hundred or by the thousand as required. All this we have seen happen in Europe in 1939.

Two lessons are clear. Democracies must attain to new levels of technical efficiency for

self-defence and learn to co-operate; secondly the countries they are called upon to defend with their lives must be in the eyes of their citizens more and more worth living and dying for, because they provide more and more the conditions and the elements of the good life—the divine right of the common man. In other words, they must strive with more insistence and passion than ever before to make real the twin ideals of social justice and individual freedom. These are the pillars essential for the support of any decent civilisation, Christian or other, and the one is needed to balance and correct the other. Someone has said that you can always get the truth from a statesman after he has turned seventy or given up all hope of the Presidency or the Premiership. Well, I have qualified on both

counts. I cannot speak for Canada, but I know that at home the ring has gone out of the old political battle-cries. The best young men and women in all parties, the leaders of to-morrow, think more and more alike on major issues. Victorian *laissez faire*, if not dead, is dying, Marxism is powerless to be born. There is a middle way freed from entrenched privilege and from class hatred, the way of political equality and economic opportunity, and this is the way our people wish to tread, freely and not to the goose step. The tragedy is that at the moment when social was overtaking scientific progress and making possible unimagined advances in the standards of life for the multitudes, the process has once again been arrested by the menace of war.

It would not be possible in such a survey as

I have attempted to make to omit all reference to the menace of war, for that shadow is over the world to-day. It is a shadow that I hope may pass, but it cannot be ignored. To my mind war is the greatest folly, apart from its essential wickedness, that can afflict mankind. Under modern conditions, it can settle nothing permanently and if protracted could leave nothing in Europe at least but anarchy behind it. Whoever starts it knows that he is condemning to death and mutilation and possibly starvation as many civilians, men, women and children, as may be killed in the fighting services. More of the great works of man, works that distinguish him from the beasts, may be destroyed in four years of intensive bombing than the Goths, Huns and Vandals could accomplish in a century. It



is enough to make Attila turn in his grave with envy.

It is the thought of the human misery and, still more, of the dark ages to follow, that is the ever-present thought that fills the mind of the leaders of democracy. They look beyond their own people to the peoples of the world and see them sliding into the abyss. That is not a prompting of physical fear: it is fear for the minds and souls of our fellow men. I have taken part in many moving ceremonies and it has fallen to me to speak on many moving occasions. But one stands out in my memory when I met the Canadian veterans of the Great War in Westminster Hall, one summer day nearly three years ago. In that great hall built by a Norman king was held the first English Parliament, seven hundred

years ago. The vast floor was packed with your men, and from the top of a great flight of steps I looked down on to a sea of faces. Around me was a group of senior officers and their regimental colours, and I hope you will bear with me if I repeat to you what I said at the conclusion of my address, for it embodies my profound conviction: "We have often spoken of the losses of the war," I said; "that is not peculiar to us. It is common to all countries that took part in the war and I have no doubt in my own mind that many of the troubles of the world are due to the fact that we have lost our best and so many of our best who to-day would have been among our leaders. I am confident of this: that if the dead could come back to life to-day there would be no war. They would never let the younger generation

taste what they did. You have all tasted that bitter cup of war: they drank it to the dregs, and even after all these years the dead are doing their work. Within the last few months, for the first time, the French, Germans and ourselves united to preserve the burying-places of our dead. On the 8th June there was a little conference in London and the French and Germans laid their colours together on our Cenotaph. When men can do that, there should be no more fighting; and it was a German who on that occasion said he hoped that after the sacrifices of the war there might be a long period of human comradeship and peace. When you go to the cenotaph and have a moment of silence and meditation, you will think of those who left you in their strength and health twenty years ago and whom

you left on those bloody fields. They will speak to you and give you that message. I would conclude by just saying this to you: that if the world—Europe and the world—can find no other way of settling their disputes than the way of war, even now when we are still finding and burying the bodies of those who fell twenty years ago, if they can find no other way, then the world deserves to perish.”

Most of my fellow countrymen would endorse what I have just said. And it is holding those views, believing that they are the bare truth, that I maintain the British Government to have been wholly right in making their declaration of the 31st March. Civilisation may perish as the result of war: it would certainly perish as the result of Nazi-ism triumphant beyond the borders of the country

## AN INTERPRETER OF ENGLAND

of its birth. To whatever ideology a people may submit itself—that is its own concern. But when that ideological system is imposed on other free countries, that is the concern of all free men.

And now we know that should the challenge come, we shall be there. In Luther's words "we can no other." We were there when the Spanish galleons made for Plymouth: we were on those bloody fields in the Netherlands when Louis XIV aimed at the domination of Europe: we were on duty when Napoleon bestrode the world like a demi-god, and we answered the roll call, as you did, in August, 1914. We can no other. So help us, God.



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39

